



Chris Kelly
573-489-0684
kelly4como@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, January 21, 2019

Kelly Calls for External Review of City Police Department

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Given the current state of law enforcement in our community, I am requesting that the Columbia City Council call for an immediate and comprehensive external review of our City Police Department.

There is clearly turmoil within the Police Department, within the command staff, with the Police union, and among the ranks, culminating in the resignation of Police Chief Ken Burton. Rather than improving the problem, his resignation has brought to light larger problems that alone cannot be remedied by the hiring of a new Chief.

The recent comments of our County Sheriff have fueled the fire. It has only added to the community distrust we have in a City police force seemingly unable or unwilling to carry out the directives of Council through a City Manager also forced to resign.

Such beliefs as expressed by the Sheriff do not serve a community that strives to improve upon our history of racial intolerance. It belies an ongoing problem of increasingly violent crime numbers, low clearance rates, low morale among officers, and an African American community that feels under siege, where parents fear for their children.

Hardline, militaristic policing methods only add to the “us vs. them” mentality. Verbalizing the need to return to those methods undermines our efforts as a forward-thinking community and, more importantly, does nothing to achieve the goal of a safe, secure environment in which to raise our children.

In the current environment it is difficult to foresee an enhanced level of law enforcement cooperation between the City and County. I continue to hope that the City and County may explore other areas of cooperation and collaboration to our mutual benefit.